

NEWS.....

from Councilmember Harold Brazil
Chairman, Committee on Economic Development

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Mayor, Key Councilmembers Voice Support for Councilmember Brazil's Economic Development Action Agenda

Mayor Anthony Williams and key Councilmembers today expressed support for Councilmember Harold Brazil's 15-point Economic Development Action Agenda of legislative and policy initiatives.

The Mayor pledged his support to the audience of more than 100 D.C. business leaders attending the Economic Development Summit hosted by Councilmember Brazil this morning.

Council Chair Linda Cropp and Councilmembers Vincent Orange (D-Ward 5) and Kevin Chavous (D-Ward 7) also attended and spoke in support of the Action Agenda. Councilmembers Jack Evans (D-Ward 2) and Sharon Ambrose (D-Ward 6) issued written statements of support.

Mr. Brazil, chairman of the Council's Economic Development Committee, developed the Action Agenda in consultation with a 51-member Advisory Committee and presented it at the Summit, held at the George Washington University Media & Public Affairs Center, 21st and H Streets N.W.

“Harold understands that the Economic Development Committee is more than just oversight; it is also leadership and vision. Harold can count on me to move forward with a strong economic program,” Chairman Cropp said in a prepared statement.

Councilmember Evans, Finance and Revenue Chair and *pro tempore* Council Chair, commended the action plan’s focus on downtown retail development and pledged to work with Mr. Brazil and the Advisory Committee members to develop the right mix of tax incentives.

Councilmember Ambrose, Chair of the Committee on Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, stated that she supports the Agenda because it will help speed development in her ward. “In Ward 6, we have the Washington Navy Yard, Southeast, Federal Center, Southwest Waterfront, and Waterside Mall developments as well as residential and commercial development in parts of downtown’s east end,” she stated.

Councilmember Orange, Chair of the Government Operations Committee noted, “The Agenda will help Ward 5 continue its success in economic development.”

In addition to Mr. Brazil’s committee, the committees chaired by Councilmembers Ambrose, Evans, and Orange have significant influence over legislation affecting economic development and direct jurisdiction over some of the Action Agenda items. Councilmember Chavous, as Chair of the Education Committee and a member of the Economic Development and Finance and Revenue committees, also plays an influential role.

“I am grateful that the Mayor, Chairperson Cropp, and Councilmembers Evans, Ambrose, Orange, and Chavous have lent their support to the Action Agenda,” Mr. Brazil told Summit participants. “Their willingness to endorse this effort demonstrates the spirit of cooperation the Mayor and the Council bring to the work of improving our city’s economic climate for the benefit of all of our citizens.”

He called the Action Agenda “a starting point, not the end point” in developing the content of the legislation he will introduce when the Council’s next legislative period begins in January. “I encourage the Mayor and my colleagues, as well as our citizens, to share their recommendations with me as we fine-tune these proposals,” he added.

Specific action items include legislation or Council oversight actions to:

- Designate one or two neighborhoods for targeted economic-development attention to achieve quick results, with other neighborhoods to be targeted later in a sequential process ultimately reaching all neighborhoods in need;
- Devote a greater share of Housing Production Trust Fund resources to promoting homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income citizens;
- Implement the recently-enacted program to provide tax credits to D.C. employers who provide financial assistance to their employees to purchase homes in the District;
- Streamline the building-permit process and consolidate some license and permit functions now spread through several agencies;
- Establish public-private workforce training programs;
- Establish a Tax Increment Financing district to promote retail development in the area of F and 7th Streets N.W.; and
- Establish a Downtown Parking Task Force.

Overall, the 21-page Action Agenda is organized in categories to achieve five objectives:

- Foster neighborhood economic development,
- Preserve and promote affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households,
- Reduce regulatory barriers to doing business and making investments in the District,
- Increase economic opportunities for local businesses and job opportunities for District residents, and
- Make strategic investments to enhance downtown development.

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